(c) whether it is also a fact that computer complaint service is not attending to the complaints of new numbers, if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether a large number of telephones in the area remained non-functional for more than seven days frequently during the current year; and

(e) if so, whether rental rebate to the affected subscribers has been allowed, where due, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The transfer has taken place with effect from 6th June, 2003.

(c) No, Sir. The computerised fault booking is operational even in the case of new numbers.

(d) and (e) 140 instances of telephones remaining faulty for more than 7 days have come to the notice of MTNL till 30th June, 2003. The delay in rectification was primarily due to cable breakdown. Rent rebate is allowed in the next billing cycle.

Complaint against telecom department

430. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been serious complaint against telecom department regarding its equipment being purchased and lying unutilized and order being placed without any justification;

(b) whether this has resulted in wastage of public funds worth rupees hundreds of crores; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE, IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There has been complaint, however, Telecom PSUs *viz.* MTNL and BSNL purchase equipments based on forecast of the requirement and justification and as per the

policy of procurement of telecom equipment and stores. Unutilized equipments due to change in requirement are redeployed.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Status of India as chip design centre

431. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGI REDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India can become a Chip Design Centre in the world;

(b) if so, whether the country has enough technical talent to cater to the existing and future demand from the Industry; and

(c) if not, the steps being taken to make India as a Centre of Chip Designing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. However, as the area is hi-tech and fast changing, continuous efforts to train and nurture talent would be required. A programme to develop special manpower for Very Large Scale Integration (VLSI)/chip design and related software involving 19 institutions is under implementation since 1998. It is proposed to expand the programme to include more institutions and emerging areas of applications during the Tenth Five Year Plan.

(c) Does not arise.

Out of order mobile telephones in Uttaranchal

†432. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that B.S.N.L's services in the State of Uttaranchal often remain out of order; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.